

***Summary of the Official Action***

In the instant Final Office Action, the Examiner has rejected the pending claims over the art of record. By the present remarks, Applicants submit that the rejections have been overcome, and respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

***Traversal of Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)***

Applicants the rejection of claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by VALLIUS (U.S. Patent No. 5,690,791). The Examiner asserts that VALLIUS shows a transfer belt 17A for transferring a web from a press section to a dryer section, in which transfer belt 17A is an elastic belt with a smooth surface. Applicants traverse the Examiner's assertions.

Applicants' independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an *elastic transfer belt* arranged to transfer the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region, in which said transfer belt is *driven or slowed to be stretched more during delivery* of the fibrous material web to said accepting element belt *than during acceptance* of the fibrous material web from said delivery element. Further, Applicants' independent claim 32 recites, *inter alia*, an *elastic transfer belt* arranged to transfer the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region, a first guide roll arranged to drive said transfer belt in a zone of said accepting element, a second guide roll arranged to drive said transfer belt in a zone of said delivery element, and *said first guide roll is structured and arranged to*

*drive said transfer belt, in said zone of said accepting element, at a speed faster than a speed at which said second guide roll is structured and arranged to drive said transfer belt in said zone of said delivery element.* Applicants submit that VALLIUS fails to disclose at least the above-noted features.

Applicants note that, while VALLIUS discloses a device for transferring a web from a press section to a dryer section, VALLIUS fails to disclose the apparatus recited in at least independent claim 1. The Examiner's basis for asserting anticipation appears to be that belt 17A of VALLIUS has elastic properties, like the recited elastic transfer belt. However, Applicants' claims are not solely directed to the construction of the transfer belt as elastic, and Applicants submit that these additional features define the instant invention over VALLIUS.

Applicants' independent claims 1 and 32 specifically define various regions within the apparatus, e.g., an acceptance region and a delivery region. The acceptance region is defined as the region in which the material web is accepted onto the elastic transfer belt from the delivery element and the delivery region is defined as the region in which the material web is delivered from the elastic transfer belt to the acceptance element. Thus, the delivery region of the elastic transfer belt is downstream of its acceptance region. Moreover, the elastic transfer belt is *driven or slowed to be stretched more during delivery* of the fibrous material web to said accepting element belt *than during acceptance* of the fibrous material

web from said delivery element. Thus, the instant invention stretches the web more in the delivery region, which is downstream of the acceptance region.

In contrast to the above-noted features, Applicants note that VALLIUS fails to provide any disclosure that elastic belt 17A is driven so as to be stretched more in the (delivery) region of transfer roll 40', in which the web is delivered from belt 17A to an acceptance element (40'), than in the (acceptance) region of roll 21, in which the web is accepted onto belt 17A from a delivery element (21), as is recited in at least independent claims 1 and 32.

Moreover, Applicants note that, while VALLIUS discloses that the apparatus makes use of difference in speed, the speed difference at issue is the web speed prior to the equalizing nip and the web speed after the equalizing nip, so as to compensate for elongation of the web in the equalizing nip, and not a speed difference between an acceptance region and a delivery region. This speed difference of VALLIUS is achieved by adjusting the speed at which belt 17A is driven. Thus, while it is apparent that VALLIUS discloses stretching the web at the acceptance region, Applicants note that VALLIUS fails to provide any disclosure regarding the stretching of the web at a downstream delivery region, and certainly fails to provide any disclosure that belt 17A is stretched more in the delivery (downstream) region than in the acceptance (upstream) region.

Therefore, Applicants submit that, as VALLIUS fails to disclose at least the above-

noted features of the instant invention, the applied art fails to disclose every recited feature of the instant invention. Thus, Applicants submit that the Examiner has failed to establish an adequate evidentiary basis to support a rejection of anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and that the instant rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Moreover, Applicants note that VALLIUS fails to teach or suggest the recited guide rolls and/or speed differentials which are utilized to drive the elastic transfer belt so as to achieve the recited stretching, as recited in at least claims 4 - 8. That is, because VALLIUS fails to disclose the specifically recited stretching of the elastic transfer belt, the guide rolls disclosed by VALLIUS certainly fail to anticipate the recited structure and arrangement of the guide rolls of the instant invention.

Thus, Applicants submit that VALLIUS fails to disclose, *inter alia*, guide rolls arranged to control speeds of said elastic transfer belt, at least one of said guide rolls being positioned in, or subsequently to, a region of delivery of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt, and at least one other guide roll positioned in, or subsequent to, a region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt, wherein said at least one guide roll is arranged to rotate faster than said at least one other guide roll, as recited in claim 4; at least one additional roll is positioned in said region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt has about a same speed as said at least one other guide roll, as recited in claim 5; said at least one guide roll is positioned behind, relative to

a web travel direction, said region of delivery of the fibrous material web to said elastic transfer belt, as recited in claim 6; a speed of said elastic transfer belt during said acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt is about 0.2% to 5.0% lower than during said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element, as recited in claim 7; and said speed of said elastic transfer belt during said acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt is about 0.5% to 4.0% lower than during said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element, as recited in claim 8.

Thus, Applicants further request that the Examiner indicate that claims 4 - 8 are separately patentable over VALLIUS.

Further, Applicants submit that claims 2, 3, 9 - 20, and 33 are allowable at least for the reason that these claims depend from allowable base claims and because these claims recite additional features that further define the present invention. In particular, Applicants submit that VALLIUS fails to anticipate, *inter alia*, said elastic transfer belt is arranged in at least one of a region of a press section for dewatering and a drying section for drying the fibrous material web, as recited in claim 2; said fibrous material web comprises one of a paper, cardboard, and tissue web, as recited in claim 3; said elastic transfer belt is arranged to travel between a press section and a drying section, as recited in claim 9; the fibrous material web is continuously guided by at least one roll or belt in said press section, as recited in claim 10; said elastic transfer belt is arranged to at least one of accept the fibrous material

web without any open draw from said delivery element and deliver the fibrous material web without any open draw to said accepting element, as recited in claim 11; said delivery element comprises one of a roll and a belt, as recited in claim 12; said delivery element comprises a press felt, as recited in claim 13; said accepting element comprises one of a roll and a belt, as recited in claim 14; said accepting element comprises one of a drying cylinder and a suctioned roll, as recited in claim 15; said elastic transfer belt is permeable, as recited in claim 16; suction devices arranged on sides of said elastic transfer belt opposite to the fibrous material web, as recited in claim 17; said elastic transfer belt has a smooth surface, as recited in claim 18; a guide roll is arranged to guide said elastic transfer belt, and said guide roll is positioned between said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element and said acceptance of the fibrous material web from said delivery element, as recited in claim 19; said guide roll comprises a suctioned roll, as recited in claim 20; and said transfer belt is structured and arranged to be stretched more in said zone of said accepting element than in said zone of said delivery element, as recited in claim 33.

Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1 - 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and indicate that these claims are allowable.

*Application is Allowable*

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending claim of the present invention meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103, and respectfully request the Examiner to indicate allowance of each and every pending claim of the present invention.

*Authorization to Charge Deposit Account*

The Commissioner is authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 19 - 0089 any necessary fees, including any extensions of time fees required to place the application in condition for allowance by Examiner's Amendment, in order to maintain pendency of this application.

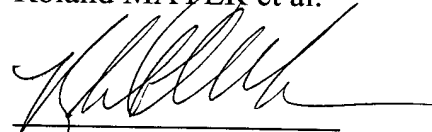
**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record, either taken alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious the Applicants' invention, as recited in each of claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

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Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,  
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